

Head lice

Head lice are wingless insects that live on the scalp and neck. They are grey or brown, have six legs and are about 2 mm long when fully grown. There can be up to 12 adult head lice on an infested scalp at any one time. Head lice, although uncomfortable, are not generally the cause of illness.

Lifecycle

Head lice live for about three weeks and the female can lay up to six eggs a day. She attaches them to the hair near the scalp and they hatch 7-10 days later. The unhatched eggs, are called nits. Hair should be examined for nits at least once a week.

How to detect head lice

Head lice are easier to detect on wet hair. The hair should be combed in sections using a fine-toothed comb or a special nit comb – available from the pharmacists. The hair should be coated thoroughly in conditioner (this should be rinsed off afterwards). It is important to comb the entire length of the hair from root to tip. After each stroke the comb should be examined for lice. The hair may also be combed over a piece of paper or a bowl of water, which can then be examined for lice.

Treatment

Once Head lice are found there are a number of treatments:-

- Insecticides
- Bug busting
- “Alternative” treatments

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